

# Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

ADMINISTRATION ANNEX  
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March 30, 2000

Department of the Army  
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers  
201 North Third Avenue  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

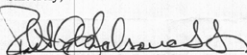
Re: Lower Snake River Dam Breaching

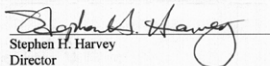
Representatives of 21 local governments in the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum region, at their March 30 meeting, voted to oppose Alternative 4, the dam breaching alternative identified in the Corps' environmental impact statement. The impacts of this alternative, as reported in the EIS, are uncertain from the biological perspective due to the loss of habitat for resident fish and wildlife, with speculation that dam breaching will significantly help restore anadromous fish runs. Recent studies using credible data show that survival today is as high as it was in the 1960s and 1970s before the dams were built. Certainly returning to pre-dam conditions is not the answer if the present survival rates are the same as they were.

The seriousness of the economic and social consequences do not favor Alternative 4. Agricultural and other raw materials and products will no longer be barged down river. Instead, they will be transported via the public roads and highways and the rail system, consuming fossil fuel, increasing air pollution, decreasing safety, and adding to congestion in the small towns and urban areas of Oregon and Washington. Increased inefficiencies in these means of transport will ultimately boost costs of the products to consumers.

The region is presently developing a fish recovery plan, setting goals and priorities that re-build fish runs while maintaining a healthy economy and quality of life for our citizens. Dam removal, in light of recent information, is risky and not the "silver bullet" for restoring fish runs. It also has significant negative environmental, economic and social consequences and should not be pursued.

Sincerely,

  
Robert C. Hasbrouck, Jr., CMA  
Chairman

  
Stephen H. Harvey  
Director

RCH:SHH:nh

cc: U.S. Representative Brian Baird  
U.S. Senator Slade Gorton  
U.S. Senator Patty Murray